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Report of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on Indicators on Violence against Women

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session (see E/2009/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Friends of the Chair on Indicators on Violence against Women. The report presents the major conclusions of the meeting of the Friends of the Chair held in December 2009 in Aguascalientes, Mexico, and the proposal for the forthcoming work of the Friends of the Chair. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

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Report of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on Indicators on Violence against Women

I. Background

1. In its resolution 61/143 on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the General Assembly requested the Statistical Commission to develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, and building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women. To that end, the Friends of the Chair group was established by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session[1] and the membership was subsequently expanded as per the instructions of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission. It consists of representatives of the following member States: Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ghana, Italy, Mexico (the chair), Thailand, Turkey, and the United States of America, with the United Nations Statistics Division acting as secretariat of the group. In addition, the following United Nations entities agreed to act as observers: the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the World Health Organization.

2. At its thirty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission requested the Friends of the Chair to facilitate the deliberation of this matter by reporting to the Commission at its fortieth session, proposing a list of basic indicators designed to assist national authorities in assessing the extent, prevalence and severity of violence against women.

3. The Friends of the Chair presented its first report to the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session for discussion. The Commission adopted the proposed set of indicators presented in the report as an interim set and first step, while at the same time requesting the Friends of the Chair to continue the work on the finalization of the work on indicators.

II. Summary of the meeting of the Friends of the Chair, Aguascalientes, 9-11 December 2009

4. The Friends of the Chair met at a meeting co-organized by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía de México and the United Nations Statistics Division in Aguascalientes, Mexico, from 9-11 December 2009.[2] Eleven members

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4* (E/2008/24), chap. I, sect. B, decision 39/116.

[2] The report of the meeting (ESA/STAT/AC.193/L.3) is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/docs/finalreport.pdf.

of the Friends of the Chair participated at this meeting: Australia, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Mexico, Thailand, Turkey and the United States of America, with Italy participating virtually by electronic exchange of comments and suggestions. In addition, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and the World Health Organization participated as observers.

5. The meeting discussed in depth and details the statistical indicators on violence against women based on analysis of statistics and metadata collected by national and international surveys on violence against women. It also provided comments and suggestions to a survey module questionnaire developed under the Interregional Development Account Project on eradicating violence against women.

Major conclusions of the meeting

6. The meeting reiterated that the vehicle of choice for successfully collecting statistics on violence against women is a separate and dedicated statistical sample survey of women and that incorporating a violence against women module in existing surveys should be considered in a careful manner and only if there is no possibility of conducting a dedicated survey; even then, such a module could be attached to only certain types of surveys, preferably a demographic and health survey.

7. Aside from surveys, the meeting concluded that there is a need to further explore administrative sources that have the capacity to provide statistics on violence against women, such as police and court statistics, hospital statistics, safe house records and so forth. In that context, the Friends of the Chair acknowledged that further work on these sources and indicators is needed and concluded that this would represent the second stage of the mandate of the Friends of the Chair.

8. Responding to the task given by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Friends of the Chair identified the following indicators as core indicators for surveys on violence against women:

(a) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(b) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(c) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(d) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(e) Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months by frequency;

(f) Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and or physical violence by current or former intimate partner during lifetime by frequency;

(g) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner;

(h) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to economic violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner;

(i) Total and age specific rate of women subjected to female genital mutilation.

9. The Friends of the Chair discussed, commented on and endorsed the proposed outline for the *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women*.[3]

Proposal for the forthcoming work of the Friends of the Chair

10. The first phase of the work of the Group consists of identifying the set of core and additional statistical indicators on violence against women and developing international *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women*. This phase will conclude with the presentation of the *Guidelines* and the report of the second meeting of the Friends of the Chair to the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-third session in February 2012.

11. For the second phase, the Friends of the Chair agreed to continue the work on two fronts. The first one refers to investigating the inclusion of indicators that have the source of data in administrative and civil society records in the core set, such as femicide, for example. The second front refers to formulating recommendations to ensure that the statistical data collections that have a source in administrative records, such as crime statistics, are adjusted to provide source on gender statistics in general, and violence against women statistics, in particular.

12. In doing so, the Friends of the Chair Group needs to coordinate closely with other international and regional initiatives aimed at improving administrative records that are planned in the next several years. In addition, the meeting recognized that there is a wealth of national experiences on the use of judicial, police and hospital records to produce statistics in general, which should be reviewed systematically in order to identify the overarching challenges of this exercise. Special attention should be paid to the impact of national legislations on the production of internationally comparable statistics on violence against women coming from administrative sources.

13. The Friends of the Chair decided to explore the possibility of introducing a worldwide homogenous violence against women statistical data collection exercise, as initiated by the Chair of the Group.

[3] Available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/default.htm.